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USU Student Organic Farm Newsletter

Plants, Soils, and Climate

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What's New On The Farm

Learning from the pros is solid gold for beginning farmers, and at USU we have access to some of the most knowledgeable ag specialists in the state, as well as successful farmers and gardeners throughout the community. We're really getting a lesson in the juggling act that is farming, and we are lucky to have experts to talk to as we work things out. There is so much to learn about soil fertility, pest and weed management, choosing crop varieties and working out how to cultivate them well, planting successions, irrigating, etc. Meanwhile, we are working with curve balls from mother nature and random irrigation failure events. We are striving for the best production possible and adjusting as we learn.

If we can do it, anyone can do it

This week, a Boy Scout troop visited the farm. It was fun to show them around and answer questions- the kids were so excited. Their scout leaders were also interested, and one of them said, "I'm glad to see you guys are figuring this out, it makes me feel like I can, too." She and her husband garden, and this season have disagreed on whether to start using natural weed management instead of Roundup. Growing food is all problem-solving, and as the season progresses, human innovation around food production makes more and more sense to us. We're focused on improving our efforts working with natural processes to accomplish more with less. It's sort of hard to take the leap into the risky business that is grappling with mother nature mano-a-mano (although, we use fuel-powered tools strategically), and it's really fun to see that our amateur efforts are inspiring fellow problem-solvers.

Field Notes

Brooke This week I am grateful for working irrigation, tools and the files that sharpen them, and YouTube. Gone are the days of manually watering the entire field with two sprinklers! In their place, we are using piped irrigation for the two fields that we now have in use. Meanwhile, YouTube has taught me important techniques for growing microgreens, a nutritious and flavorful form of greens that falls somewhere between sprouts and baby greens on the maturity scale. I learned that the first leaves that grow are called cotyledon leaves, and that the microgreens are harvested (stem and

all!) when the second set of leaves ("true" leaves) appear. YouTube also came in handy when the weed whacker trimming line needed replacing. We used the weed whacker to help us in our attempt to expose our currently weed-filled strawberry patch to more sunlight. This combined with our recently acquired knowledge of tool sharpening means that our efforts to thwart the unwanted plants in the strawberry patch should be met with more success from now on! From what I've experienced of these strawberries, I'm not sure if I'll ever appreciate another store-bought strawberry.



10 Reasons We Should All Be Inspired by Plants

by Camilla Moses

1. We piled mounds of dirt on top of our potatoes, and it only made them grow stronger.

2. We've also accidentally trampled a few potatoes, yet somehow they seem unaffected. Who knew potatoes could be so inspiring?

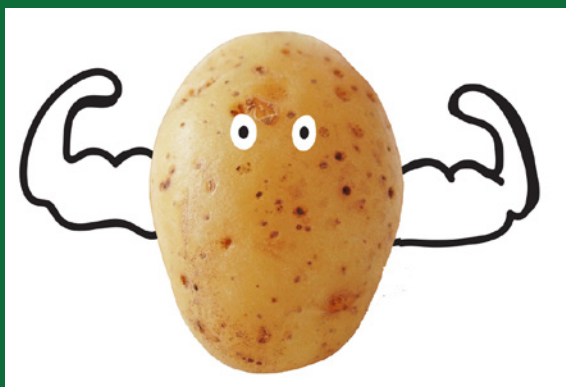
3. Weeds are very confident. They pave their own way through life without letting other plants beat them down.

4. Plants don't let one cold night stop them. When I accidentally forgot to close the hoop houses one night, they kept on growing anyway.

5. Plants create their own energy. Humans can't photosynthesize, but why shouldn't we be able to create our own positive energy?

6. Plants never stop striving to live until

they die. When we weeded a section of our strawberry bed, it got more sunlight and immediately bloomed the next day. Even though the rest of the patch is overgrown with weeds, the strawberries are still doing the best they can.



7. Plants are humble. They accept all the fertilizer and water we give them. It takes a certain amount of gentleness to accept help when it is given.

8. Plants understand that life is about give and take. They take nutrients from their surroundings and produce food in return.

9. Plants never interrupt you. Enough said.

10. Plants are consistent with who they are. A pepper plant will never try to grow a watermelon





What's In The Basket

Greens while they last!

Tatsoi, mizuna and spinach - We harvested these last Saturday in anticipation of the heat and bolting. Thank goodness for cold storage!

Swiss chard - We hope you love this tangy green as much as we do. It's perfect steamed, and the stalk has great texture and flavor if you chop it and steam or sautee it up with everything else.

Kale - Our kale is the best! Dr. Reeve's little boy doesn't like greens, and she says he'll eat our kale because it's sweet. We agree, we've noticed that there's a slight anise note to our greens.

Green onions - So spicy! More of these to come, they're just getting bigger and tastier.

Beet greens - These are so fun to harvest while we watch the beets grow. They're delicious in salads or can be sauteed just like the other hardy greens.

Next Week We Anticipate-

Radishes, U-Pick Strawberries, arugula, chard, kale, green onions and microgreens

Un-RECIPE FOR

Easy Omelet(s)

An Un-Recipe offers guidelines to create delicious dishes based on the way ingredients, kitchen tools and cooks interact in the kitchen. Email us with questions!

INGREDIENTS:

Ingredients:
1 tablespoon good oil
2 to 3 green onions, white and light green parts thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
2 heaping cups roughly chopped greens
4 large eggs, divided
6 tablespoons feta or shredded cheese, divided
Or more, for more!

DIRECTIONS:

Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Add the green onions and cook, stirring frequently, until tender, 2 minutes. Add the garlic and cook an additional 30 seconds to 1 minute until fragrant.
2. Add the greens and cook, stirring frequently, until wilted and tender, 2½ to 3 minutes. Remove the cooked greens and set aside.
3. To make the first omelet, raise the heat to medium high. Whisk together 2 of the eggs, 1 teaspoon water, and a pinch of kosher salt and pepper. Pour the mixture into the skillet. Once the edges have set (about 30 seconds), pull back each corner with a spatula and tilt the pan so that the uncooked egg falls to the edges. Allow eggs to set, 30 seconds.
4. Arrange ¼ cup of the cooked greens and 3 tablespoons of the cheese over the top. Give the pan a shake to dislodge the omelet and allow it to completely set up, 40 seconds to 1 minute.
5. Fold omelet in half and serve. Repeat til you're done!

